

Episode: Healthy Eating Motivation



Full Transcript

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello there. Welcome back to the podcast. I hope you're having a wonderful week and that you're moving the needle forward with your healthy eating goals. Or whatever other goals you have set for yourself. Today, I want to talk about the motivation to eat healthy. I know there's a very large chance that many of you listening will feel like you have zero motivation to change your eating habits and that this is a huge problem. That this is what's preventing you from achieving your goals with food and body. And that you don't know where to go or what to do without that motivation. If this is the case, you're not alone. I felt this way for a very, very long time. And almost all of my clients when we begin working together, feel this way as well. Totally normal. When I was really struggling with food, I remember literally typing into Google, "how to feel motivated to eat healthy". And then thousands and thousands of articles would pop up. Most of them were titled things like "healthy eating motivation hacks" or "how to gain willpower to eat healthy" or "the trick to feeling motivated to eat healthy".. Things like that. But the main theme of these articles was really just "motivation hacks". Like motivation was a switch you could turn on and off at will. That it was a problem that needed to be fixed. So, I would read these articles because I was desperate. All I wanted was for healthy eating to not feel so damn hard. And what these articles suggested were that I take a lot of random actions to feel motivated. Some suggestions were that I incorporate cheat days. I start tracking my progress and counting calories. Giving myself a reward system with food. Repeating affirmations every day. And you already know where this is going. But none of these things worked. Like, at all. Whatsoever. I still for the longest time felt zero motivation to eat healthy. And I was really always wondering what was wrong. Because I wanted to change my results with my body so badly. And I know a lot of you will feel that separation. Between your desire to lose weight and your inability to feel motivated to do so through healthy eating. It's a really tough spot to be in when you have no idea

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why it's happening. Which is what I'm going to clear up for you in this episode. And the hard truth is, there are no hacks to feeling motivated to eat healthy. That's just not the way your brain works at all. And I want to be really real with you here and make something clear. Anyone who tries to convince you that they have the hacks to motivation or the hacks to healthy eating for that matter, is lying to you. They have no idea what they're talking about. And I say this with so much certainty. Because it's not said enough. The health industry in particular is notorious for making those empty promises. And that's not what I'm here to do for you. I'm here to tell you that you can't hack motivation. But, the good news is that you don't need to hack motivation to change your eating habits. None of this is a problem.

It's also important to clarify that a huge reason why these "motivation hacks" do not work, is because feelings aren't created through our actions. You don't feel motivated because of something you do. Or because of something outside of you. Your feelings are created from your thoughts. Almost every source you find on healthy eating motivation will imply that you can create motivation by doing all the things. By giving yourself that cheat day or by establishing that reward system. And this doesn't work. It may work for a little while, but it won't last. Because motivation is created from your thinking. If you want more on this, feel free to go all the way back to episode one "Why You Don't Eat Healthy". I really go deeper on this in that episode. But, the point is. Motivation can only come from your brain or from your mind.

Now, there is something that we need to further clarify here. You may be thinking, "Wow! This is great news! All I need to do is figure out how to create thoughts that allow me to feel motivated all of the time!". And I hate to be the bearer of bad news in this episode, again, but this also isn't the way it works. Because motivation is a surface level emotion. And it's not one that ever lasts. It's very fleeting and instantaneous by design. And this is because of how your

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brain and the feeling of motivation works. So, here's what happens. I'll use an example with food. You'll be planning your week and you'll have written down your food plan. You know this is the food plan that will bring you one step closer to your goal. So, you feel very motivated. You're just excited and you know that this week will be different. That you'll finally follow through with that meal plan you set. It's at this point that your brain will anticipate a reward, thereby increasing the dopamine levels in your brain. This is where motivation comes from. It's a spike in dopamine levels. That is always triggered by anticipation of a reward. That's it. Then, a few days into the week, your motivation starts to go away. That spike of dopamine that you had at the beginning of the week has slowly been dropping off. And eventually motivation has completely left the building. For me, this was always around the middle of the week. And then from there, not only do you feel zero motivation to eat healthy. But you actually start experiencing all of the negative emotions about it. Because when motivation has gone away, you're left with all of the same emotions that created the eating habits you have now. Which you haven't learned to process. This is so, so important. And then you're going to wonder what you're doing wrong. Because of what you make this lack of motivation mean, you always inevitably fall off your food plan. Which leaves you in the same place as when you started. From here, you'll have no idea what went wrong. So, you think you probably have to change an action for you to feel motivated. Which you now know this isn't the way it works, but this is what most of us do. So this is when you'll do all of the Google searches to figure out what went wrong. And maybe you'll try a different diet. Or maybe you'll try giving yourself that cheat day. But eventually, after you've quote unquote "tried everything" you'll realize that nothing is working long-term. You're always starting your weeks feeling motivated, only to find yourself with zero

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motivation a few days later. And I have to say, you guys, that I was stuck in this motivation meltdown for years. I was always trying to change my actions and circumstances so I felt more motivated. And nothing ever worked. So, I know I really took my time going through that scenario. But re-listen to this if necessary. I really want you to understand how this works. There is never a point where you'll always feel motivated. This doesn't exist.

And this is the big reason why meal planning and following through hasn't been working for you. Because once that motivation has worn off to eat healthy, you'll be left with all of the emotions that led to the results you have with food now. So, maybe that's doubt, shame, regret, fear – whatever that may be for you. Feelings are always what compel you to take certain actions with food. And when the motivation goes away, because it always does, you're left with those original emotions that created your unhealthy eating in the first place. And of course you want the motivation to come back, because it feels good right? It allows you to cover up those negative emotions for a bit. But this doesn't teach you how to work through the emotions that are already there. To truly change your eating habits in a way that lasts, you cannot rely on motivation to do so. It's really time to put the motivation myth to rest for good. Because a dependency on motivation won't serve you. Here are the things you actually want to focus on. And they're not as sexy as "quick-fix motivation hacks" but they will get you the results you want. First, you have an awareness of the deeper emotions that come up for you after motivation has left the building. So, next time you try and follow through with a food plan and motivation goes away, instead of feeling discouraged I want you to get really, really curious. Observe all of the negative emotions you're left with when motivation isn't there. Observe how it feels in your body. Notice what about the emotion feels uncomfortable for you. Get very familiar with it. Then, I want you

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to determine what thoughts are creating this emotion for you. So, for example, let's say you realize you feel a ton of doubt after motivation has gone away. This was definitely the case for me in the past. You're feeling all this doubt, and then maybe you realize that the thought causing this doubt is "I'll find some way to screw this up", right? You are now aware that this thought leads to doubt, and then I want you to determine the food actions you take from this emotion. And be as detailed and honest as possible. So, for me, when I experienced doubt, I would self-sabotage with food. I would stop following my meal plans and buffer. And when I say buffer I mean do whatever I can to cover up the negative emotion. I would buffer with Netflix, online shopping - whatever made me feel better in the moment. And the point you doing this for yourself is awareness. I want you to be hyper aware of how you're creating your results with your body based on the actions you take with food from that emotion. When motivation goes away, the feelings you're left with are responsible for creating the results you have now. And this is so incredible to realize when you put this work into practice. With this awareness, you can then create new beliefs and feelings that serve you over time. For example, let's say you determined that the thought "I can't be trusted with food" leads to the feeling of doubt for you, which compels you to take the action of emotional eating. From here, you can create a new sequence. Where a new thought and feeling compels you to take the actions you want. So, let's say in order to follow through with the food plan you need to feel committed. A thought you could think right now might be "I can feel doubt and keep promises to myself with food". Right? It may look a bit different for you, but practice this. I will say, this is not a quick-fix. You need to be willing to process your doubt, or whatever negative emotion you're experiencing. And you need to be willing to create new beliefs that serve you. And remember that a new belief only works

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if you can actually believe it. Don't try and create a thought like, "Eating healthy comes natural to me", because you won't believe it yet. And that's okay. This is actually why affirmations don't work at all. Because repeating a thought to yourself that you don't believe is a waste of time. Choose thoughts that you can believe right now. This will still serve you. If you can focus on doing this exercise for yourself, you will be so much further ahead than you are now. And it's kind of a fascinating shift to make. I want you to stop focusing on feeling motivated all the time. But I do want you to focus on the emotions that come up when motivation is gone. This will do so much for you.

Now, before I wrap up this episode I want to get into the tough love segment here. Because it's important I'm being really honest with you about this. Since it's such a huge problem for so many of you. The fact is, that any time you focus on getting motivated is time you're just wasting. And really, when you're focused on trying to feel motivated, all you're focused on is feeling good. You're not focused on moving forward, eating healthier, or achieving your goals. You're focused on having it feel good every second along the way. And I was like this too, so don't worry. But this is what you're doing. You're unwilling to experience the negative emotion that comes with growth. And there's nothing wrong with not feeling motivated. Not having motivation isn't a problem. It only becomes a problem when you think it means you should stop. And I'll say that again. No motivation only becomes a problem when you think it means you should stop. Or when you think it means something has gone wrong or you're not capable. Whether you feel motivated or not is irrelevant. Stop making the fact that you have no motivation to eat healthy, mean you shouldn't. Just a little newsflash for you, your brain is never going to feel motivated to do things that serve you long-term. Your brain hates change. So, be really onto yourself. And ask yourself if this is something you're really willing to do? Are

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you willing to experience the negative emotion associated with change? To see those dream results you want that are available to you? Really be honest here. I think for most of you, when you really think about it, you are willing to do this. I think most of you are willing to have zero motivation along the way. But it's important that you really make that decision for yourself. And I also want to say, I know it may seem like you want to feel motivated all the time to eat healthy, but you really don't. Because that's not where true growth lives. While it sounds cheesy, it's never about the destination, it's about the journey. For me, I was always so focused on eating healthy so I could reach that dream end result with my body. It was all I thought about. What ended up happening when I reached that result, is that it wasn't even the result that mattered. It was who I became along the way. Which is what happens during the journey where you're willing to grow. Growth comes from feeling that discomfort and honoring your commitments anyways. I want you to wholeheartedly know that you can do this without motivation. You are stronger than you know. And I always want you to constantly be asking yourself, "What if it's not a problem that I don't feel motivated?" and "What if I could move forward without ever feeling motivated to do so?". This will take you so far. Alright, my friend. I'll talk with you next week.